

# September

## GSFC Fitness Center Newsletter

We will be closed on Labor Day- Sept. 7<sup>th</sup>

*Jacobs Ladder Challenge*  
*Climb Mt. Everest – 29,035 FT.*  
*And win a free T-shirt*

**September is YOGA Awareness Month:** Yoga is offered on Thursdays at 12 PM. *YOGA is for POSERS! Send us a picture of you performing your favorite Yoga pose to display in the fitness center.*

**Yoga on Thursday, September 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**will be in the fitness center**  
**NOT Bldg. 28**

Reach the Beach ends Sept. 30th

## National Atrial Fibrillation Awareness Month

**What Is Atrial Fibrillation?** Atrial fibrillation, often referred to as "afib", is an irregular heartbeat, a rapid heartbeat, or a quivering of the upper chambers of the heart, called the atria. Atrial fibrillation is due to a malfunction in the heart's electrical system, and is the most common heart irregularity, or cardiac arrhythmia.

**What Does Atrial Fibrillation Feel Like?** Different patients have different symptoms. Some patients describe afib as feeling like skipped heartbeats, followed by a thud and a speeding up or racing of the heart. Others describe it as an erratic heartbeat, strong heart palpitations, or simply a rapid heart rate. For still others, it feels like fluttering, butterflies, or even a flopping fish in the chest. Others have chest and throat pressure that mimics a heart attack, or constriction around the left bicep. The first time, it's really scary, and you wonder, "Is this a heart attack?" It may leave you dizzy, faint, light-headed, anxious, breathless, weak, or just plain exhausted. After it stops, you may feel drained. For some people, afib doesn't stop, and may continue on for hours, days, weeks, months, or even years.

**How Big a Problem is Atrial Fibrillation?** As we age, the incidence of atrial fibrillation increases. As Baby Boomers continue to age, we can expect to see the atrial fibrillation epidemic worsen. Today afib impacts more than 5.1 million people in the United States, with expectations of 15.9 million by 2050<sup>1</sup>. These numbers, from the Mayo Clinic, only reflect those with atrial fibrillation confirmed by an electrocardiogram, and don't include many more with symptoms but who cannot be confirmed. There are possibly also many more who don't yet know they have it. The increase in obesity and stress in our society can be expected to accelerate the incidence of atrial fibrillation as well. Visit <http://www.stopafib.org/causes.cfm> for more information.

1 Miyasaka, Yoko, et al, "Secular Trends in Incidence of Atrial Fibrillation in Olmsted County, Minnesota, 1980 to 2000, and Implications on the Projections for Future Prevalence" <<http://www.circ.ahajournals.org/cgi/content/full/114/2/119>>, Circulation, 2006;114:119-125.

  
**StopAfib.org**